



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana

Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee

<http://www.ohsep.louisiana.gov/interop.htm>

BRANT MITCHELL
CHAIRMAN

SONYA WILEY-GREMILLION
VICE CHAIRMAN

January 1, 2010

Honorable Bobby Jindal
Governor of Louisiana
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Governor Jindal:

On behalf of the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC), it is my pleasure to provide this report on the status of interoperable communications for first responders in the State of Louisiana.

Background

Louisiana is challenged to develop an interoperable communications system among a landscape that is highly vulnerable to multiple weather events of catastrophic proportion. Further challenges include budget constraints and grant restrictions that limit our options.

Louisiana's local communication systems are highly disparate. These systems range from recently deployed systems to aged and even out-dated systems. Local entities have been trying very hard to work within their means. There are parishes that have succeeded in establishing interoperability and others who struggle with a lack of funding and resources.

The SIEC has made progress to advance the state's communications capabilities. Its mission is to design, construct, administer, and maintain a statewide shared communication system with the capacity to transport voice, data, and imagery within the system as well as to develop and approve system design, system testing, and an implementation plan. To accomplish this, the SIEC established policies and secured funds for the system operation, administration, and maintenance.

This governance body has been an essential element in Louisiana's plan to build a statewide communications system.

LWIN Status

The SIEC has selected Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) as the official title of the ASTRO Project 25 (P25) statewide shared communication system. We chose this title in order to reflect the importance of all types of communication avenues and the need to merge voice, data, and imagery transmission capabilities into one seamless, efficient system for all participants. Every week, the SIEC continues to process applications for organizations to join LWIN and we view our increasing numbers as a sign of our success.

Current statewide coverage for LWIN is 87.95% portable, street-level coverage. This means that every user on the system with a compatible radio can send and receive transmissions in over three-quarters of the State. Even though the current coverage is short of the strategic goal of 95%, every site that we add increases the coverage area.

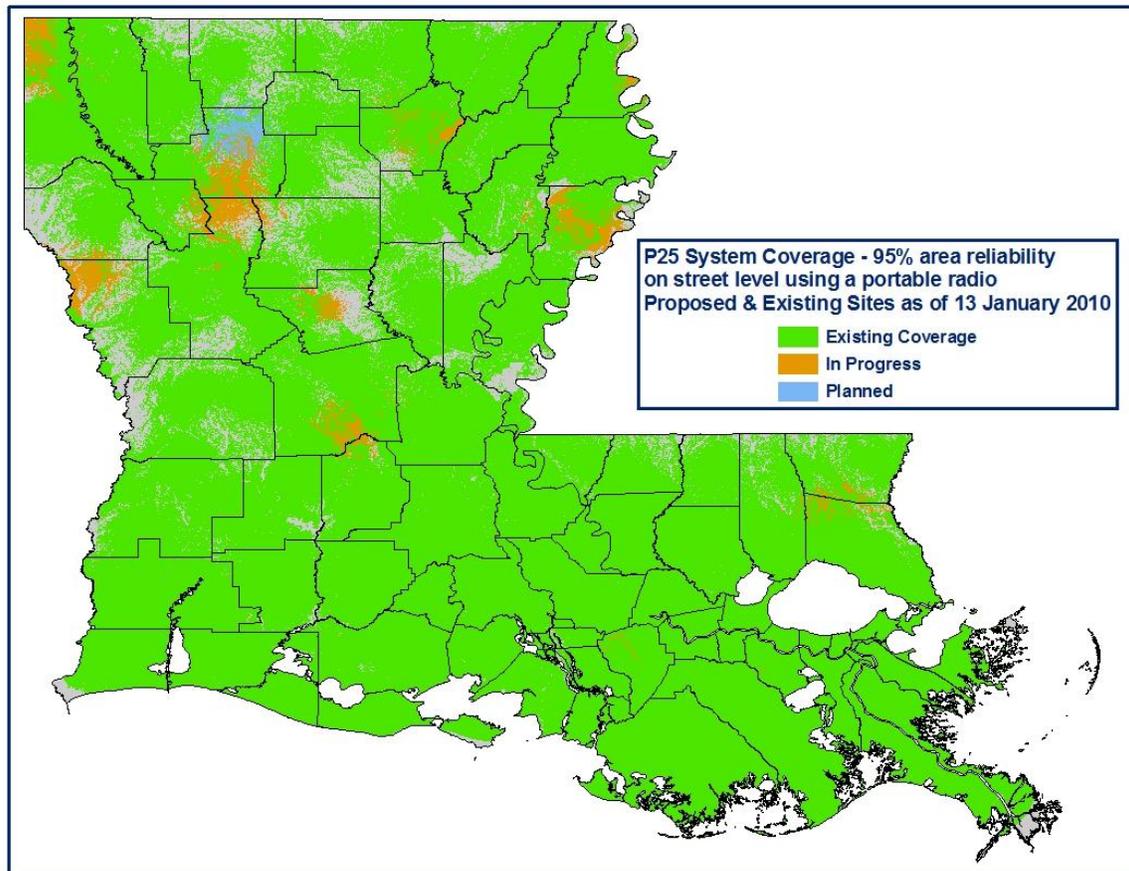


Figure #1: LWIN Coverage Area

We can further delineate this coverage between the southern and northern areas of the State. Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 have a combined coverage area of 95.75% coverage, thus achieving our goal for one-half of the State. Currently, Regions 6, 7, and 8 have a combined coverage area of 80.56%. Upon completion of current projects by the end of the 2010 Fiscal Year, we expect Regions 6, 7, and 8 combined coverage area will increase to 92.25%, bringing the expected statewide coverage to approximately 94%. Exact coverage will be finalized once the specific locations of the remaining sites are determined.

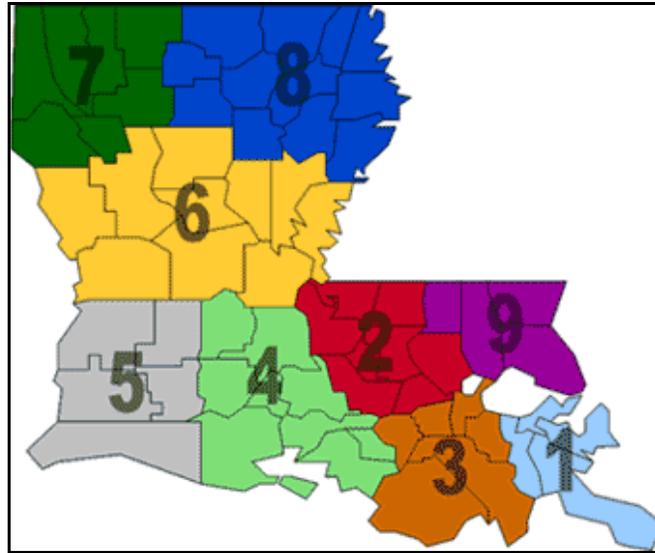


Figure #2: Louisiana's Emergency Management & Homeland Security State Regions

Site Overview

The LWIN system is currently comprised of 87 active sites, 16 sites in various stages of deployment, and an additional 17 sites currently in the planning stage for a total of 120 sites. Additionally, there are 5 mobile trailer-sites available for rapid deployment during emergencies for either supplementary coverage or temporary replacement of inoperable fixed sites. Together, LWIN will have a total of 125 fixed and mobile sites operational.

The SIEC expects to have all 120 sites operational by the end of the 2010 Fiscal Year, barring any unforeseen delays. This configuration will give every parish in the State at least one active site which substantially increases the ability of local governments and organizations to access LWIN. This availability for local use conforms to the strategic goals of the State of Louisiana Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). Goal 5: Usage establishes, "...an environment that eliminates hurdles and encourages maximum use of the statewide network for local, tribal, regional and state first responders for all planned events and emergency incidents." Additionally, Objective 5.2 is characterized by the intent to "Increase the number of users on LWIN to facilitate better integration of local and state first responders during times of emergency."

Upon completion of all 120 sites, we anticipate to conclude the build out phase of LWIN and meet the strategic goal of 95% portable street-level coverage. At that point, the major focus of the SIEC will shift to continually improving the in-building penetration, capacity, and maintenance / upgrade of LWIN. The magnitude of meeting this milestone since beginning this undertaking in 2005 after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is monumental and is recognized on the national level as a model implementation.

During 2009, we increased the capacity of 8 sites to ensure that all registered users have the ability to communicate when and where needed. This implementation consisted of the purchase of a complete Channel Repeater Expansion Module for each selected site to create additional capacity in areas that were prone to prolonged periods of high traffic, a higher than average number of busies, and sites that experienced issues during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. This effort was shared by Motorola and the State of Louisiana and was optimized to allow the areas to be working sites as soon as possible.

Efforts such as this have contributed to the unprecedented success of LWIN. One of the most important metrics that we continually monitor is the number of “busies” per month within the system. A “busy” is any time a user attempts to make a transmission and cannot due to all resources being used. At that time, the user will hear a specific tone and must reattempt to send the message. The SIEC’s hard work has decreased the number of “busies” from 1,428 in January 2009 to 98 in December 2009.

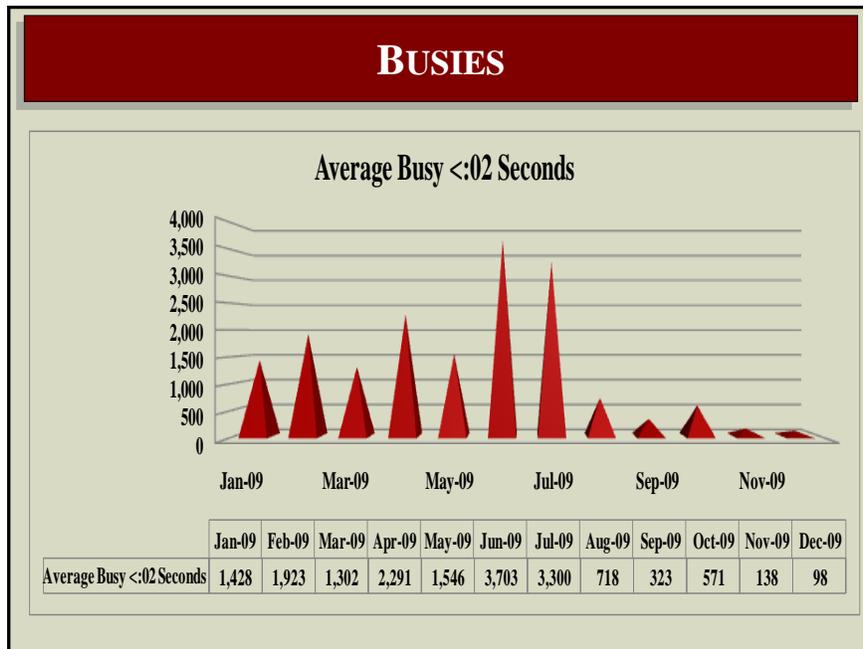


Figure #3: Number of Busies

Subscriber Ratios

From January 1, 2009, through December 31, 2009, LWIN has seen an increase of subscriber units from 40,354 to 49,152 (8,798 units = 21% increase).



Figure #4: Number of Subscribers

Additionally, the monthly average of Push-to-Talk (PTT) transmissions has shown a similar upward trend from 5,388,332 to 6,606,064 (1,217,732 PTT = 22.5% increase).

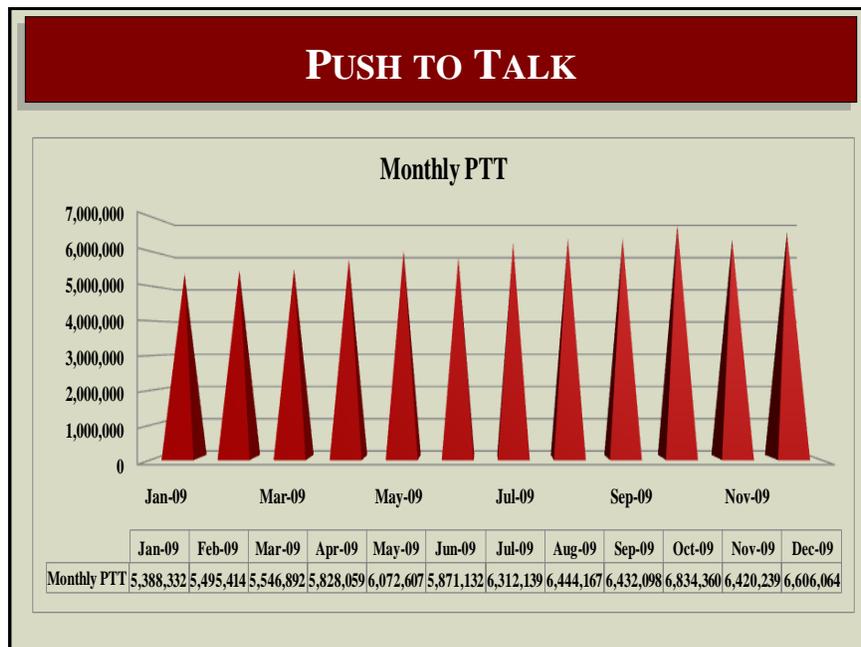


Figure #5: Push-to-Talk Transmissions

This data is even more impressive when combined with the decreasing number of “busies.” Ratio of Busies to PTT has gone from 1 Busy for every 3,773 PTT transmissions to 1 Busy for every 67,409 PTT transmissions (0.026% to 0.00015%).

Appropriated Funding for Major Projects

FY2008/2009 Appropriations

The state for fiscal year FY2008/2009, appropriated over \$44 million for interoperability related projects. This funding is being used toward the following projects:

\$477,967 – Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) Statewide System Management and Administration, including (4) TO positions.

\$8,367,828 – LWIN System Maintenance (IAT with Dept. of Public Safety Services)

\$11,077,500 – Acquisition of subscriber units and/or consoles for state and local first responders. Approximately 4,000 radios and/or consoles will be purchased as a result of this funding.

\$279,083 – Other smaller interoperability projects and acquisitions (SIEC expenses, Region 9 gateway installation, and Region 5 additional coverage)

\$18,552,128 - Installation of a 3rd master site in north Louisiana. The acquisition and installation of (42) 700MHz voice repeaters for central and north Louisiana.

\$5,491,330 – Acquisition of 17 LWIN sites to complete the phased build-out of the statewide communication system.

FY 2009/2010 Appropriations

\$9,425,627 million is recommended for interoperability related projects from the Louisiana Communications Interoperability Fund and \$6.5 million in federal grants. This funding will be used toward the following projects:

\$547,996 – Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) Statewide System Management and Administration, including (4) TO positions.

\$8,279,907 – LWIN System Maintenance (IAT with Dept. of Public Safety Services)

\$1,297,900 – Upgrade of LWIN software from 7.5 to 7.7 to refresh, maintain currency, and upgrade key features for control devices.

\$597,724 – Acquisition related to increasing LWIN capabilities.

\$5,191,347 – Acquisition of a FM radio-based alert and messaging system that enables emergency management personnel to create and send digital alerts and messages to targeted recipients.

\$120,000 – Acquisition of 4 portable generators for redundant power.

State Funded System Maintenance

In order to encourage migration and usage from existing disparate systems to LWIN, the State continues to appropriate funding to cover 100% of the cost associated with LWIN administration, maintenance and operation. Local first responder agencies are not assessed a subscriber fee to access LWIN.

No subscriber fee is a critical component of LWIN and requires continued support from all involved, especially those with budgetary approval. The importance of this aspect of LWIN cannot be understated and is one of the principal factors of its continued success. The previous statewide system, based on 800 MHz frequencies, had subscriber fees and these fees were a commonly cited reason for non-acceptance by local political subdivisions.

Currently, GOHSEP, via the Office of Interoperability, receives and manages the annual maintenance budget for LWIN. Through an Inter-Agency Transfer (IAT), we transfer the necessary funds to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for daily operation, maintenance, and upgrades. Beyond FY 2009/2010, the LWIN System administration and management for personnel and maintenance is expected to increase by 20% annually as more capacity and sites are added to the system.

Future Year LWIN System Costs:

FY	DPS	GOHSEP	Total
2010/2011	\$11,385,293	\$462,895	\$11,848,188
2011/2012	\$13,662,352	\$555,474	\$14,217,826

SIEC Accomplishments

Meetings and Events

SIEC activities are in direct support of the State of Louisiana SCIP. As defined in the plan, Goal 3: Technology / Equipment states that Louisiana will,

“Create robust and redundant system infrastructure available for use by authorized Federal, State, and Tribal agencies, as well as local entities that have eligibility in the Public Safety Radio Pool as described in Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations (47 CFR-Part 90).”

The progression from identifying strategic goals via governance to successfully implementing those goals is a cornerstone of achievement. The SIEC cannot understate the important contributions that all stakeholders have had in making this goal a reality.

Regional Interoperability Committees (RICs) and Parish Interoperability Committees (PICs)

The SIEC has taken great effort to ensure the involvement of key stakeholders from local and state first responder organizations as they conduct regular monthly meetings to discuss the needs of communications interoperability in Louisiana. This process has provided the SIEC with essential information to make sound judgments as they pertain to interoperability as well as provide the populace with information such as progress and developments on communications networks.

To this regard, the SIEC has promoted the establishment of Regional Interoperability Committees (RICs) and Parish Interoperability Committees (PICs). These committees are designed to provide the SIEC with input for all regional and parish communication interoperability issues; advance the development of Tactical Interoperable Communication Plans (TICPs) for their respective areas of responsibility; and obtain consensus among all localities, disciplines, and organizations within the region regarding communications interoperability projects.

Working in conjunction with the SIEC, the RICs and PICs can help educate local policymakers on the importance of communication interoperability. Moreover, their participation will help align the State of Louisiana SCIP to their unique needs by providing input and data during the annual review and revision process.

These RICs and PICs will have the ability to develop a standing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among all parishes and localities within their region to address sharing resources for regional communications interoperability planning and implementation. Finally, they are fundamental resources that will be able to develop grant investment justifications for all entities within their areas, provide recommendations to the SIEC for consideration, administer awarded grant funds for projects, and establish advisory committees for specific issues.

The creation of these functional groups is another example of SIEC advocating the use of proven methods for the establishment governance, usage, and other elements as seen in the SafeCom Interoperability Continuum.

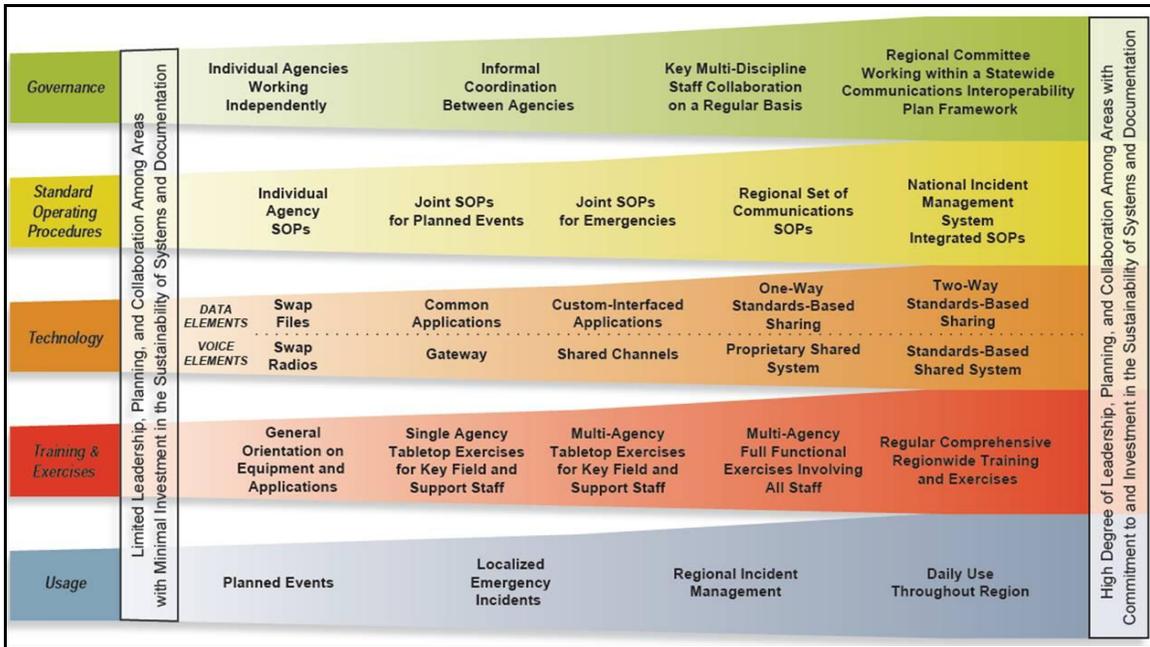


Figure #6: SafeComm Interoperability Continuum

Microwave / Satellite

Objective 3.3 of the State of Louisiana SCIP directs that the SIEC will “Acquire and install infrastructure and backup/redundancy equipment for the expansion of LWIN to include repeaters, T-1 lines, microwaves, satellites, and any other wired or wireless communication technology.” In aligning projects with the SCIP, the SIEC Technology Sub-Committee has developed a small working group to recommend a redundant solution for LWIN system to include microwave and/or satellite technology.

Currently, LWIN infrastructure utilizes leased T1 lines as the primary means of backhaul connecting the Master and remote sites with each other across the State. This backhaul connectivity is required to allow the subscriber radios to transmit outside of the geographical boundary of a tower and achieve statewide connectivity. Leased T1 lines are very susceptible to outages due to environmental factors and events occurring during times of emergencies when LWIN is needed most.

The SIEC Technology Sub-Committee is developing a proposal for redundant backhaul connectivity via a microwave and/or satellite backbone. The proposal will incorporate the “loop” switching concept and the “Spur with Hot-Standby radios” concept for all the sites. Loop switching will allow for a switch of the path should there be a failure at the site while Spurs with Hot-Standby radios will have

the ability to switch to a secondary microwave radio / satellite should the primary radio experience any failure.

This type of redundancy is necessary for continued operations during times of emergency and is only one example of the forward thinking and proactive stance that the SIEC is pursuing. In being able to affect the robustness and strength of LWIN, the SIEC is able to maneuver and influence any problematic situation before its onset rather than reacting to the unexpected.

Gap Analysis Report

GOHSEP created a report that was used as a tool in determining the most cost-effective selections of the final sites within the LWIN. The analysis focused on 21 major gaps of coverage located in the central and northern portion of the state and 22 minor gaps of coverage spread throughout the state. The following metrics were identified and used:

- Total Area of Gap (Square Miles)
- Total Area of Gap without Federal Land (Square Miles)
- Total Population
- Miles of State Highway
- Critical Infrastructure
- Parishes Impacted
- Urban Areas Impacted
- Total Area Covered by Gap (Square Miles)
- Percentage of Urban Area in Gap

Within this analysis, GOHSEP scored the gaps based on the above metrics and developed a rank ordering for each gap. The Major and Minor Gaps by Weighted Score was developed based the following 4 metrics:

- Total Area of Gap without Federal Land (Square Miles)
- Total Population
- Miles of State Highway
- Aggregate Percentage of Urban Area in Gap

Population was given the highest weight and the raw score of this metric was multiplied by a factor of 4. The next highest weight was Total Area of Gap without Federal Land and was multiplied by a factor of 2. The remaining 2 metrics were used as scored. This weighting was done to emphasize the

importance of population over all other metrics, seconded by coverage area, and followed by the remaining metrics being of equal importance in relation to each other.

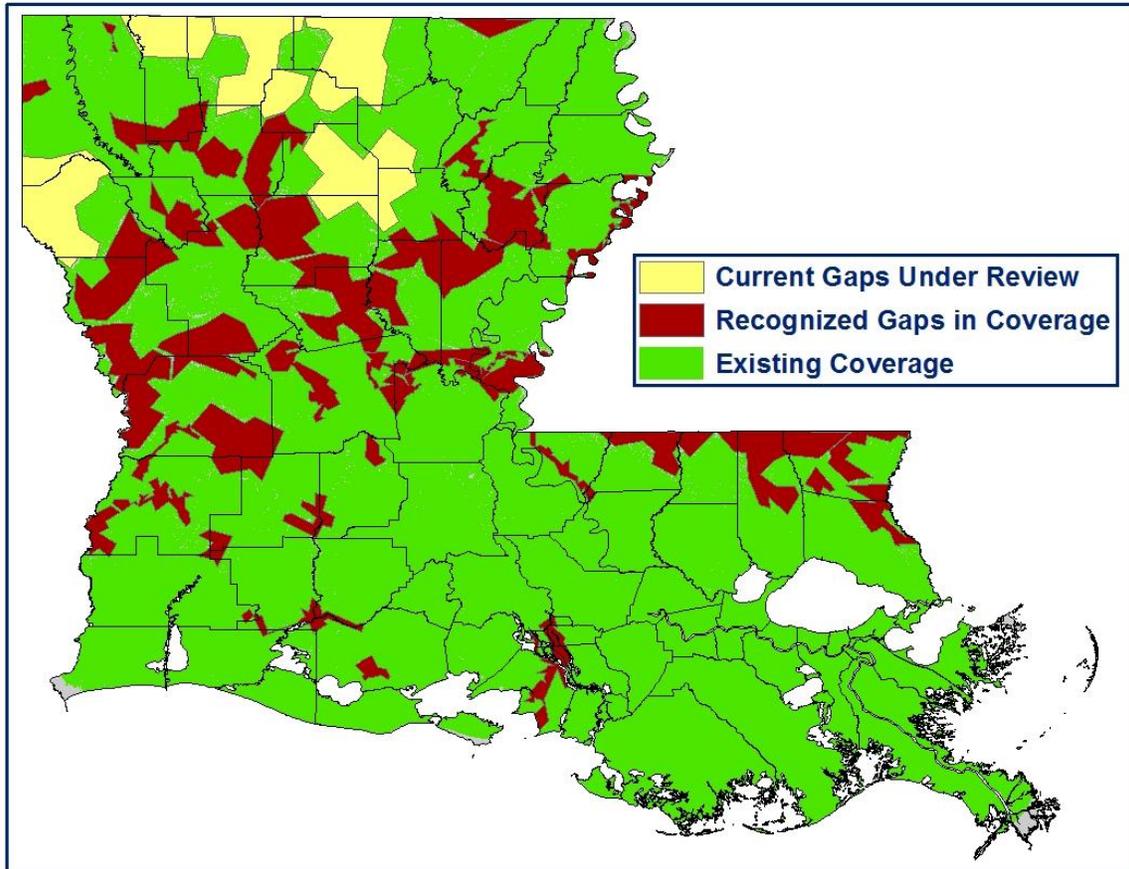


Figure #7: Gap Analysis

New Tower Assessment

Site selection for the last remaining sites is underway and is expected to be completed shortly. In support of this effort, GOHSEP has prepared an assessment of tower locations based on analytical data of known coverage gaps. This tool, in addition to the Gap Analysis, is intended to assist in the determination of site selection.

Taking critical information received from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Motorola, we conducted analysis on each site as it pertains to an existing

gap. We ranked each site based on the following criteria:

- Total Raw Coverage of the Site (Weight of x2)
- Total Raw Coverage that is in the Identified Gap (Weight of x3)
- Total Coverage of the Site with the Noise Eliminated (Weight of x2)
- Total Coverage of the Site with the Noise Eliminated in the Gap (Weight of x3)
- Total New Population Covered (Weight of x4)
- Total Miles of Roads Covered (Weight of x1)
- Total Miles of New City Limits Covered (Weight of x2)

As can be ascertained by the weight of each criterion, Total New Population Covered (x4) was given the highest priority, followed by those with a Weight of x3, then Weight of x2, and, finally, Total Miles of Roads Covered was ranked least influential with a Weight of x1. We scored each variable from 1 to 10, multiplied the scored by its weight, and then totaled the score (higher score is better). Each site now has a number ranking and can serve as a tool to determine the best overall value of each site.

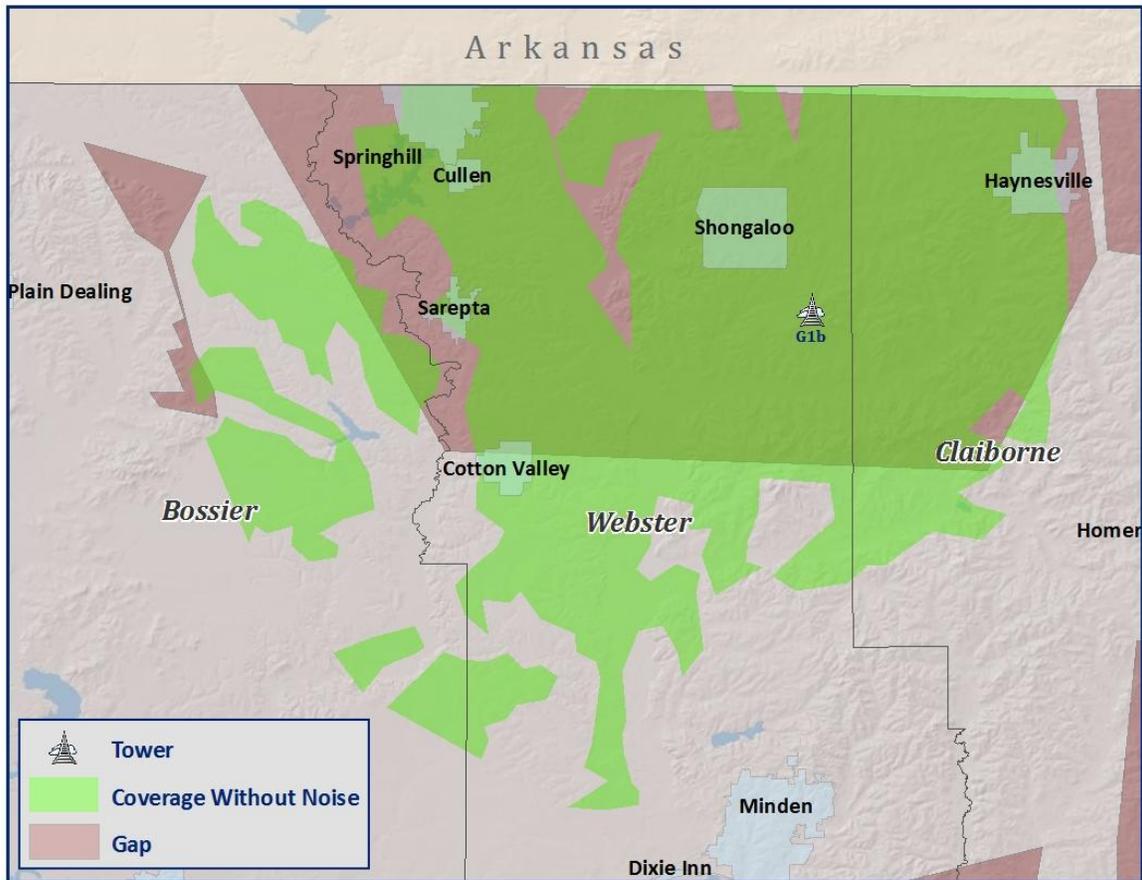


Figure #8: New Tower Assessment

Creation and Maintenance of the SIEC Website

The SIEC's website is a compilation of administrative and public awareness information providing both general information as well as a library of interoperability data available to all SIEC members and Louisiana first responders. Visitors can access the most up to date information regarding interoperable communications and to obtain copies of By Laws, Policies, Procedures, Plans and Presentations. The website address is <http://gohsep.la.gov/interop.aspx>.



Figure #9: SIEC Website

Refinement of the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP)

The SCIP subsumes and builds upon previous planning efforts by state agencies and local jurisdictions in cooperation with key federal agencies. The SCIP continues to play a pivotal role in outlining the state's communication needs and addressing those needs to create a seamless interoperability network. The SCIP was drafted by the SIEC and support staff with the help of regional representatives, organizational leaders and state legislators in an effort to form a comprehensive plan for meeting the state's interoperability needs. This document also met the requirements of the Departments of Homeland Security and Commerce, Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program, serving as a model plan for other states to use as a resource tool in developing their plans.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development Workshop

On April 22-23, 2009, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provided technical assistance in conducting a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development Workshop at GOHSEP. All SIEC members were invited to attend and benefited from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) being present to facilitate SOP development.

The purpose of the workshop was to develop a template for SOPs that will be used to develop parish, regional, and state SOP's for interoperability during day-to-day and emergency operations. Contracted through the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) within DHS, SMEs assisted local emergency responders and government officials in establishing procedures to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters. These SMEs work to ensure, accelerate, and attain operable and interoperable emergency communications nationwide.

In conjunction with the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP), their mission is to provide free technical assistance to enhance interoperable communications between Local, State, and Federal emergency responders and public safety officials. This assistance is available to cities and States that have received grants from DHS in support of the goals and objectives outlined in the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

Development of Statewide Communications System, Policies

The SIEC and Office of Interoperability continue to develop and approve statewide system policies. These policies provide detailed guidance on system governance, general requirements, maintenance, expansion, enhancement, access and programming. Policies outlined below are new since the last Bi Annual Report and have either been approved or pending approval:

Talkgroup Management Policy / 004 (Approved)

This policy ensures adequate talkgroups are available for all current and future LWIN users.

As with any system, there is a finite amount of resources available to be share amongst all participants; talkgroups within LWIN are no exception. When an organization becomes a member of LWIN, Department of Public Safety (DPS) will assign the new member a certain number of talkgroups to be used for daily operations. This number is based on the number of subscriber units in agency and the different functions of the agency. An exception clause is included to provide for any special needs of an agency on a case-by-case basis.

Grade of Service Policy (Pending Approval)

The purpose of this policy is to explain and define methods and criteria used to help maintain a Grade of Service (GOS) of 5 percent or better for LWIN.

The LWIN radio system will maintain a 5 percent GOS criterion. This means that given a certain quantity of radio users roaming throughout the system, each LWIN site, during the busiest time of day, should support the traffic volume with only a 5 percent probability of a call being blocked (95 calls out of 100 will be completed without queuing).

LWIN Grade of Service (GOS) is a measurement used to help quantify system loading. It helps describe a subscriber's ability to access the system considering existing or predicted radio traffic volume. It is generally expressed as a percentage, which represents the probability of being "denied" access due to the unavailability of radio channels to support the call. In essence it is a measure of how congested or busy the radio system is.

Infrastructure Policy (Pending Approval)

The purpose of this policy is to provide a mechanism to integrate locally procured communications infrastructure into LWIN in order to improve the coverage area and in-building penetration.

The SIEC has committed to a 95% or better coverage goal as stated in the State of Louisiana SCIP and encourages Local Political Subdivisions to commit resources for areas that they feel demonstrate a need for greater than 95% coverage. This commitment is undertaken with the understanding that any Local Political Subdivisions Infrastructure Improvement Request does not address any of the pre-determined sites that are projected to provide the above stated coverage. The processes outlined in this policy provide the guidance and management for integrating locally provided equipment into LWIN system.

Network Coordination Policy (Pending Approval)

The purpose of this policy is to ensure LWIN users are able to access statewide interoperability talkgroups during emergency and day to day operations. This policy outlines the coordination agencies must execute in order to use statewide talkgroups and is intended to enable the State Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to manage these limited resources.

GOHSEP Calling Policy

GOHSEP has implemented a new State and Local Radio Calling Policy, which ensures that weekly 700 MHz and/or 800 MHz radio tests are conducted by GOHSEP with each parish EOC. As each region completed installation of 700MHz radios, the region as a whole was moved from 800 MHz to the 700MHz – LWIN system. GOHSEP has completed the parish EOC re-banding radio installation in June 2009, and anticipates a reduction in communication issues now that all parish EOCs are on LWIN.

In conjunction with the Calling Policy, GOHSEP also provided and configured a redundant, voice communication path for all parish EOCs via a Satellite Radio Phone system. Completed in June 2009, this system gives every parish EOC

another path for communication during times of emergencies that is not reliant upon traditional phone lines or cellular transmissions. The Communications Desk at GOHSEP also conducts a weekly Satellite Radio Phones test in combination with the LWIN system test.

Within this policy, GOHSEP also conducts test of The National Warning System (NAWAS). NAWAS connects the emergency services headquarters of the 50 states to FEMA's Mt. Weather and various military and government facilities. It was designed and maintained to alert the states to a nuclear attack, but is also used during major disasters. The Communications Desk has the responsibility of testing and maintaining NAWAS in order to ensure its availability when needed.

SIEC Outreach Programs

Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC) Meeting

In December, representatives from the Office of Interoperability attended the National Governors Association (NGA) Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC) meeting. As part of the event, they presented a display to share information regarding LWIN, outlined best practices, and showcased recent achievements.

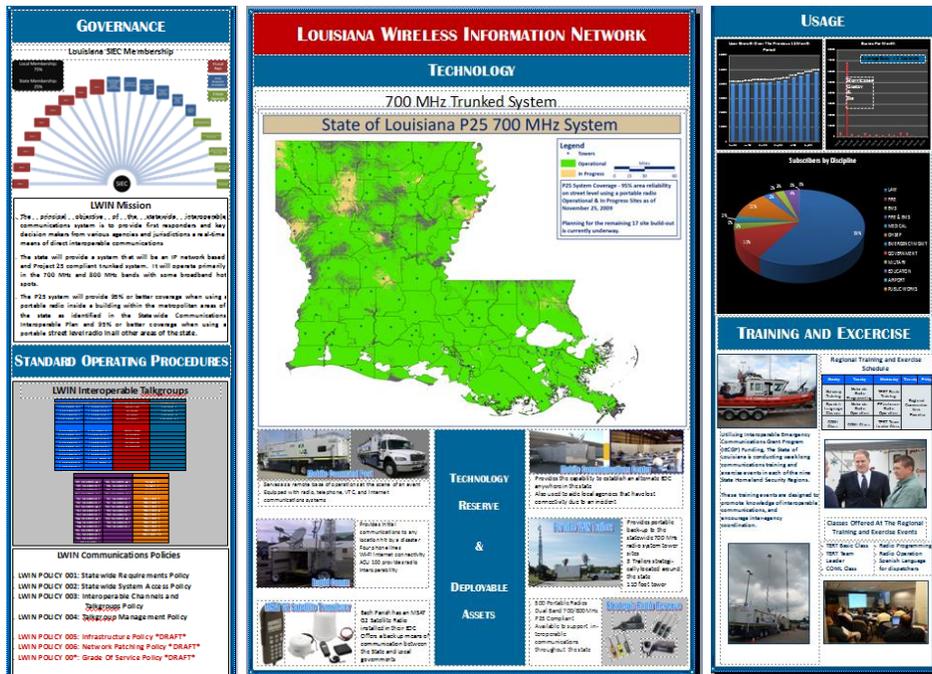


Figure #10: SWIC Presentation

SAFECOM Emergency Response Council Presentation

In December, Brant Mitchell, Chairman for the SIEC, delivered a presentation to the SAFECOM Executive Committee (EC) and Emergency Response Council (ERC). The EC and ERC are comprised of national emergency response association representatives and Federal policy makers, as well as local

emergency responders from across the country. Their involvement is one of the mechanisms available to the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that Federal, State, local, and tribal stakeholders have a voice in the development of nationwide planning efforts and an opportunity to provide insight on user viewpoints, needs, and resources.

Mr. Mitchell presented a briefing outlining recent Louisiana success stories, such as the results of Act 797 (SB788), LWIN's improved performance during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the positive results of the SIEC, and other achievements mentioned throughout this report.

IECGP Training and Exercise

In June, Region 5 (Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis Parishes), GOHSEP, Louisiana Sheriff's Association, and the Louisiana State Police held a training event on interoperable radio communications equipment including testing the new LWIN ASTRO 25 – 700/800MHz system. This was the first regional training exercise sponsored by GOHSEP and was followed by the second Regional Communications Event during December for Region 7 (Caddo, bossier, Webster, Claiborne, Bienville, Red River, and DeSoto Parishes).

The communications drill provided state and local first responders with free hands-on training. The training consisted of familiarization for interoperable gateway devices, EF Johnson & Motorola radio programming and operations, Incident Command System (ICS) Communication Leader (COML) classes, and Telecommunicators Emergency Response Training (TERT).

The intent of the event was to enhance emergency responder skills through training and exercising. Plans for conducting a similar Regional Communications Event for each region (one per quarter) are currently underway.

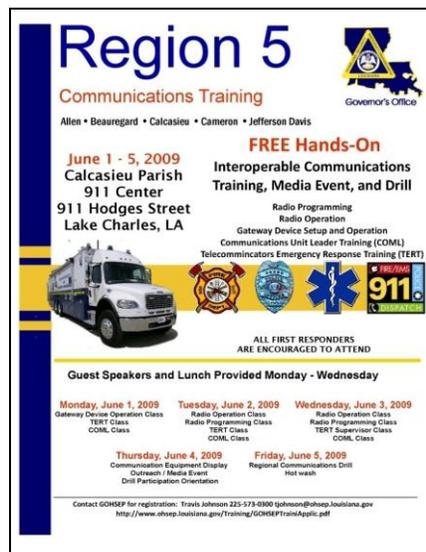


Figure #11: Region 5 Communications Event Flyer

Communication Leader (COML) Training

On March 3-5, 2009, GOHSEP facilitated the scheduling of a Type III Communications Unit Leader (COML) course. All SIEC members were invited to attend.

During all-hazards emergency response operations, radio communications among multiple jurisdictions and disciplines—including law enforcement, fire service, and emergency medical service—is essential. Unfortunately, the absence of an on-scene radio communications coordinator often has compromised critical operations. To close this capability gap, DHS's Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) funded SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, to develop performance and training standards for Type III COML training. OIC worked with emergency responders and Federal partners—including the Office of Emergency Communications and the Incident Management Systems Integration Division (IMSID)—to formulate curriculum recommendations for a comprehensive Type III COML course.

The Type III COML course trains emergency responders how to be radio communications unit leaders during all-hazards emergency operations—significantly improving communications across the multiple disciplines and jurisdictions responding to an incident. This COML training will qualify emergency responders as lead radio communications coordinators if they possess the necessary prerequisites, including knowledge of the following: local communications; communications systems; and local, regional, and state communications plans. COML responsibilities include developing plans for the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities, managing the distribution of communications equipment to incident personnel, and coordinating the installation and testing of communications equipment.

Multi State Communications

The SIEC continues to enhance interoperable communications among Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana through the Gulf States Interoperable Communications Compact (GSICC). The GSICC's mission is to enhance the ability of each state to provide both voice and data communications across local and state jurisdictional boundaries.

On December 11-12, 2008, SIEC representatives attended the Gulf Coast Communications Interoperability Consortium held in Mobile, Alabama. Louisiana was well represented as the only state to fill all 50 allocated slots, including a large number of the SIEC members. An agreement was reached to develop a Steering Committee to establish partnerships and regional interoperable communications projects between Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Also discussed was the possibility that Louisiana will host the event next year, thusly allowing SIEC to further showcase the State's recent achievement.

On July 1, 2009, the SIEC began a contract to facilitate the State of Louisiana's involvement in the GCICC. Through this contract, personnel established processes for the State of Louisiana to become an active participant in GCICC events and programs and will conduct coordination and consultation activities to assist in cross-state communications and information exchange. The goals of this contract are to build an even stronger alliance among the three participating states; create an inter-state MOU among GCICC members to allow resources to be used across our region; and assist in soliciting additional or increases in grant funds to assist the participating states' interoperable communication efforts.

Louisiana has also been collaborating with Arkansas and Texas to look at ways in which interoperability and wireless communications can be enhanced between the States for day-to-day and emergency operations.

Emerging Technology

The SIEC also recognizes the importance of monitoring emerging technologies that may have application in the enhancement of interoperable communications. The Office of Interoperability recently awarded PSIC funding to local agencies to fund emerging technology solutions.

In support of this effort, SIEC is currently evaluating the deployment of a secure IP-Based Broadband Mesh Network based on the 802.11 protocol for public safety and response agencies. Currently, there are several projects in various stages of implementation throughout the State of Louisiana including parish governments, local governments and political subdivisions.

The following State Agencies have mobile assets which will require the capability to establish communication with the local mesh networks: GOHSEP, DPS, Louisiana National Guard (LANG), and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fishers (LDWF). The mobile assets range from small communication trailers to mobile command posts.

Contained within this project, SIEC is developing a solution that is designed around the Public Safety 4.9 GHz Network, will allow each mobile asset to function as a standalone hotspot, and have the ability to extend the range of each hotspot. Also, SIEC seeks to have the ability to interconnect each unit with and expand local 4.9 GHz Networks regardless, provide backhaul for local 4.9 GHz Networks, and interconnect with other 4.9 GHz Network components.

Conclusion

Louisiana continues to be at the forefront of interoperable communications and remains a model implementation for the rest of the nation. Achieving statewide interoperability for Louisiana's emergency responders is a massive undertaking, and together we will continue making efforts to improve interoperable communications systems and foster cooperative relationships among all first responders as Louisiana leads the nation in achieving true communications

interoperability with a shared system providing a more efficient, and effective emergency response team for the citizens of our State. We applaud the efforts of all those involved and implore you to continue your vital support of this critical effort.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Brant Mitchell

BM:blb

cc: SIEC Members